

Suffering for a Divine Purpose | Hebrews 2:5-18 | 2/2/2020

- Introduction
 - When we think of suffering we never attribute that to a good thing or something we look forward to. We don't wake up in the morning and ask God if we can suffer today or ask for trials and hard times.
 - **So, since we always associate suffering as being something undesirable and negative, when we suffer the first thing in our minds isn't always that its for a God ordained purpose that is for our benefit.**
 - **Because if suffering is so dreadful why would our loving God allow us to suffer or cause it upon us? That's a good question.**
 - But today we are going to look at Scripture to see that there is in fact times where divinely ordained suffering whose purpose is to benefit the Christian or in most cases other Christians.
 - This all applies to times when God has used the evil of man for He good purpose.
 - **There are plenty of other reasons why we suffer, and they are certainly not all divinely ordained like when we give ourselves self-inflicted wounds by our poor choices and actions.**
 - **The one thing that Scripture shows us, is that in all cases where there was divine suffering for a child of God, that there was always something to gain from it.**
 - **God does not make His children suffer for no purpose.**
 - **There is a cost to suffering**
 - **There is a gain to suffering**
- Suffering of Christ for a divine purpose
 - **The greatest example of suffering that was because of a divine purpose is the suffering of Jesus Christ.**
 - **That's actually the definition of passion.** We like to think of it as a strong love but it truly means the suffering and death of Christ.
 - Although His suffering and death was done because of his love or "passion" for us.
 - **Christ's suffering wasn't in vain or for some needless purpose.** We know that Jesus Christ had to die on the cross He had to suffer for all of us.
 - **The pain and suffering**
 - Jesus Christ (who is God) suffered and died as a man.
 - We may find this hard to imagine at first, how can Jesus who is God allow Himself to experience pain and suffering?
 - **Jesus was fully God, yet He was also fully man.**
 - **He felt all the emotions: Sadness, joy, love and even anger.**
 - **He felt all the pain and misery that a normal person would feel.**
 - He could have at anytime have stopped the soldiers who were beating Him, if He so desired He never would have gone to the cross. But yet He did it anyways. **He didn't dull the pain at all He took the suffering in full force.**
 - John 10:17-18
 - "This is why the Father loves Me, because I am laying down My life so I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father."
 - **In fact, we see that it by the grace of God that Jesus was glorified and brought Himself down so that He would die.**
 - Hebrews 2:9

- “But we do see Jesus—made lower than the angels for a short time so that **by God’s grace He might taste death for everyone**—crowned with glory and honor because of His suffering in death.”
 - How is that its by God’s grace that He suffered and died? How often do we associate “God’s grace” with suffering and death?
- **Why do you think that Jesus took such a direct form of man where He had to feel pain and suffering?**
- That question of “why” can easily boggle the mind if we dwell on it for very long. **In fact, “why” is the same question that we have when we suffer.**
 - In the case of Jesus, we know the “why” and we’ll talk bout it.
 - **I also want you to think about the disciples at this time. They still had a very difficult time understanding that Jesus was going to Suffering and die they had a very hard time with the “why”.**
 - However, Scripture does give us some insight on this.
 - **So what was the “cost” for the suffering of Christ?**
- **The answer to the “why” for the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.**
 - The suffering and death of Jesus Christ was for a divine purpose.
 - **Jesus had to take the form of man in its entirety**, so that He could bear our sins and become the perfect sacrifice. This way He could be the propitiation for our sins.
 - Hebrews 2:17
 - “Therefore, **He had to be like His brothers in every way**, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, **to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**”
 - Propitiation
 - Propitiation signifies the removal of God’s wrath by the offering of a gift.
 - It is expressed as an atonement in the Old Testament.
 - **He did this because He loves us.**
 - 1 John 4:10
 - “Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
 - **Jesus had to become fully man otherwise He could not take on the sins of man and become that perfect sacrifice for us.**
 - It was absolutely required, because there was no other man or human being that could ever do this.
 - The sacrifice had to be a spotless lamb who was unstained from the world. There is NO ONE in the world who fits that description.
 - **Jesus Christ was the example of the perfect man and who we would be had it not of been for sin.**
 - We like to think sometimes what we would be like had sin not entered into the world.
 - Well we get a glimpse of that from the life of Jesus Christ.
 - Because Jesus was a perfect man who never once sinned and who obeyed God perfectly. That is what we should be, that is the perfect example of what we will become as well in heaven.
- **The great gain because of divine suffering**
 - **So what is the gain from divine suffering?**

- **One thing we know for certain is that if our suffering, hard times or trials are ordained by God then we can be certain that there is great gain to be obtained from it.**
 - **So what was the great gain for Jesus’s suffering?**
 - **Our salvation is only possible because of the sufferings and the sacrifice of Christ.**
 - Hebrews 2:10
 - “For in bringing many sons to glory, it was entirely appropriate that God—all things exist for Him and through Him—should make the source of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”
 - **Not only did God allow Jesus to suffer but the Scripture says that it was entirely appropriate.**
 - For Jesus to suffer in death was the only way for our sins to be destroyed.
 - It wasn’t like there were 5 other ways that God could have done this it was the only way.
 - **The cost of Jesus’s suffering in taking on the form of man in its entirety allowed Him to destroy the power of death that Satan held over us which is a great gain.**
 - Hebrews 2:14-15
 - “Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the Devil—and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.
 - Because Jesus came fully as man and was sacrificed He destroyed the power of death that Satan was holding over us.
 - This isn’t the death of the body, but it was the death of the soul that will live for an eternity in Hell.
 - All those who have true saving faith and believe in Jesus Christ will be saved and will never feel the punishment that Jesus took on the cross for us.
 - **The big picture is not always visible**
 - So at the time for those who did not know God’s master plan one might think that Jesus suffering was unnecessary. That it should have never of happened.
 - The disciples had a hard time accepting and believing that Jesus was suffering, they didn’t understand why it was happening.
 - But knowing God’s plan for the sufferings of Jesus we know full well the results and why it had to happen.
 - **This must be an example for us that when we are in a difficult situation that we must put our faith and trust in God that He knows what He is doing.**
 - **Our job is to be obedient and to listen for His instruction.**
 - **What is the “gain” from the suffering of Christ?**
- **As Christ suffered for a divine purpose, so shall we.**
 - So Scripture makes it very clear that Christ suffered but for a divine purpose. He suffered and died because of His love for us.
 - **So a question might be well it was OK for Jesus to suffer for a holy and divine purpose. But is it really OK or necessary for us to do the same?**
 - What does Scripture say?
 - 1 Peter 2:21

- “For you were called to this, **because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps.**”
 - This passage speaks a lot also to suffering unjustly but its quite clear that we are to follow in the example of Christ. Christ did suffer unjustly in the world and the result of that was eternal life for those who have faith in Him.
- Likewise, for the Christian there is a “cost” and a “gain” for our divine suffering.
 - In what ways do Christians suffer, go through trials or have a hard time?
 - This isn’t always an easy question to answer as again there are many causes for suffering in Christians.
 - However, in all cases of suffering we must look to Christ.
 - If our suffering is because of evil in the world, then we must lean upon Him for support and to show us how God can be glorified even when our circumstances were intended for evil by Satan.
 - If our suffering is because of our own foolish decisions, then we must call upon God for forgiveness and mercy.
 - Divine – Be obedient to God in everything you do, keep your focus on Him and He will guide you. Be patient and keep you eyes open for the “great gain”.
 - Jesus suffered so that He can help us when we are tested and suffer.
 - Hebrews 2:18
 - “For since He Himself was tested and has suffered, He is able to help those who are tested.”
 - Sometimes our suffering is for the glory of God, sometimes it is for ourselves and at times it is for the benefit of others.
 - God’s works are displayed in our sufferings.
 - There are times when our times of difficulty, trials or suffering may be of a divine ordination so that God’s works can be seen within us.
 - Blind man
 - John 9:1-3
 - “As He was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples questioned Him: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? **Neither this man nor his parents sinned,**” Jesus answered. **“This came about so that God’s works might be displayed in him.”**
 - What was the initial reaction of the disciples for placing the blame for the blind mans sufferings?
 - The initial reaction of the disciples regarding this mans blindness was to blame it on the sin of his parents.
 - Now sin from a parent can in fact affect their children this is also biblical. However, its not the only reason for hard times or suffering.
 - But it wasn’t his sin either he didn’t do anything to put himself in that position.
 - I’m not sure the disciples expected to hear Jesus’s answer to their question. It wasn’t sin that caused this man to be blind, but it was divine.
- God will use our problems, our trials and our sufferings to further His kingdom.
- He actively uses them so that His works may be displayed through us.

- I've heard countless stories of being in the hospital and the fact that Christ was showing through them it touched either the Dr's and nurses or other patients.
- Through the works of Jesus Christ in healing the blind man many have come to know Christ including the blind man himself.
 - John 9:35-38
 - "When Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, He found him and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him? He asked. Jesus answered, "You have seen Him; in fact, He is the One speaking with you." I believe, Lord!" he said, and he worshiped Him."
 - **What are some examples where God has used our trials, hard times and sufferings so that His works could be displayed to others?**
 - **What are those works that were displayed?**
 - **We must look at every seeming bad situation and look to see how we can use it for Christ.**
- God's use of our sufferings, trials and hard times will not conform to our perceived logic.
 - When God uses our circumstance to display His works or for us to grow it rarely will follow human logic.
 - In most cases where God uses our suffering or trials to display His works we don't immediately recognize it nor would we choose it.
 - God's ways are above ours and He sees the big picture that we are blind to.
 - This is most evident in the story of Lazarus.
 - Jesus makes it clear from the beginning that His works through Lazarus was to be for the glory of God.
 - John 11:1-4
 - Knowing the story, we know that there is also suffering
 - Jesus's decisions seem to defy our human understanding by waiting 2 days before going to Lazarus.
 - John 11:5-6
 - Our human logic finds this difficult because since Jesus was essentially acting as an emergency DR we would have thought He would have run to Lazarus right away. But instead He waited 2 days.
 - Jesus delayed until Lazarus passed away.
 - John 11:14
 - Jesus intentionally waited. He could have gone up earlier or for that matter He could have saved him without having to leave where He was.
 - **Jesus's decision to wait was for a divine purpose but it did cause human suffering and grief.**
 - But Jesus had a divine purpose for His delay
 - John 11:15
 - Jesus was glad because He wanted His disciples to believe. This act was necessary to enforce the belief in His disciples.
 - **What do you think Jesus wanted them to believe?**
 - **What was the cost? What is the gain?**
 - Jesus's delay caused suffering and sadness for Mary and Martha.
 - John 11:17-21

- John 11:32
- Martha believed that had Jesus had been there before he died that Jesus could have saved him.
- **There are times when God's divine purpose may require a Christian to experience a hard time.**
- Jesus's power was questioned
 - Mary, Martha and the rest questioned the extent of the power of Jesus. Not that he couldn't have saved him but that there were limits and that he chose not to.
 - John 11:36-37
 - **Do we question God in our sufferings?**
- The gain of Lazarus's resurrection
 - John 11:39-42
 - As Jesus said in the beginning Lazarus was used for the glory of God.
 - Although not in a way that he or anyone else thought possible or would think it logical.
 - The Gain
 - The disciples were strengthened in their belief in who Jesus was.
 - Mary and Martha's eyes were opened to the full extent of the power of Jesus Christ.
 - The witnesses to the resurrection of Lazarus saw proof that God sent Jesus Christ into the world.